

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MASS MO AG MR FR SP
SUBJECT: MOROCCAN USE OF AMERICAN ARMS: APRIL 14 DISCUSSION
WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUCETTA

REF: STATE 077779

1. FONMIN BOUCETTA RECEIVED ME, WITH AMBASSADOR TO U.S. BENGELLOUN PRESENT, ON APRIL 14 FOR HOUR-LONG FRANK, BUT ALWAYS FRIENDLY DISCUSSION ON MOROCCAN USE OF AMERICAN ARMS. I BEGAN BY REVIEWING FONMIN'S MID-MARCH DISCUSSION IN WASHINGTON, ALSO REFERRING TO KING HASSAN'S MARCH 20 PRIVATE COMMENTS THAT HE HAD NO NEED FOR THE OV-10'S AND COBRAS IN THE SAHARA, AS THE SITUATION WAS WELL IN HAND AND HE WOULD BE RECEIVING MIRAGE F-1'S AND PUMAS FROM FRANCE, BUT THAT HE WOULD NEED THEM IN THE FUTURE TO DEFEND HIS COUNTRY AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ATTACK BY ALGERIA (RABAT 1955).

2. DRAWING FULLY ON POINTS CONTAINED IN REFTEL, I CONTINUED WITH DETAILED PRESENTATION OF CASE FOR MOROCCAN RESPECT IN PRACTICE OF U.S. INTERPRETATION OF MOROCCO'S TERRITORIAL LIMITS SPECIFIED IN 1960 BILATERAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT, NOTING LIKELIHOOD OF CLOSE CONGRESSIONAL QUESTIONING ON THIS ISSUE AND POTENTIAL ADVERSE LINKAGE WITH NEXT YEAR'S FMS CREDITS FOR MOROCCO. ALSO OUTLINING CURRENT BLOCKAGE OF APC'S, I

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CONCLUDED WITH REQUEST FOR ASSURANCES ON END-USE OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE, SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING FMS EQUIPMENT ALREADY IN MOROCCAN INVENTORIES AND FUTURE COMMERCIAL SALES UNDER MUNITIONS CONTROL PROCEDURES. REGARDING NON-USE IN THE SAHARA OF FMS EQUIPMENT FURNISHED IN THE FUTURE, NEITHER BOUCETTA NOR BENGELLOUN CONTESTED MY REPEATED REFERENCES TO BENGELLOUN'S ASSURANCES GIVEN IN WASHINGTON MARCH 13 (PARA 6 OF STATE 069811).

3. FONMIN RESPONDED THAT MOROCCO DID NOT WISH TO COMPLICATE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND IN FACT HOPED TO HELP THE DEPARTMENT IN ANY WAY IT COULD IN PROBLEMS IT MIGHT HAVE WITH CONGRESS. IN THIS REGARD, HE SAID HE WISHED TO REITERATE, AS HE HAD DONE IN WASHINGTON, HIS CATEGORICAL ASSURANCES THAT PAST OR FUTURE MATERIEL FURNISHED BY THE UNITED STATES WOULD NEVER BE USED FOR AGGRESSION, THAT IT WOULD BE EMPLOYED SOLELY FOR LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE, AND THAT MOROCCO WOULD FULLY RESPECT ANY AND ALL AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE CONSIDERED THAT THESE ASSURANCES SHOULD ASSUAGE CONCERNS IN CONGRESS.

4. ASKED ABOUT THE APPLICABILITY OF THESE ASSURANCES BECAUSE OF OUR DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF MOROCCO'S TERRITORIAL LIMITS, BOUCETTA REPEATED, AGAIN AS HE HAD EXPLAINED TO THE SECRETARY IN WASHINGTON, THAT HE COULD NOT STATE THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO PARTS OF MOROCCO--MOROCCO WITH AND MOROCCO WITHOUT THE SAHARA. HE AND AMBASSADOR BENGELLOUN THEN REPEATED THAT I WAS ACCREDITED TO THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO WHICH INCLUDED THE SAHARA, AND NOTED THAT WHEN TARFAYA AND SIDI IFNI HAD BEEN RECOVERED FROM SPAIN, THE UNITED STATES RECOGNIZED THAT ITS THEN AMBASSADOR BECAME ACCREDITED TO THE MOROCCO THAT INCLUDED THESE TWO AREAS WITH NO QUESTIONS RAISED. WITHOUT BELABORING THE POINT, I MERELY NOTED THIS SUBJECT WAS REVIEWED AT LENGTH WITH HIM IN WASHINGTON BY DEPARTMENT OFFICERS WHO
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EXPLAINED THE DIFFERING CIRCUMSTANCES BETWEEN THE SIDI IFNI/ TARFAYA AND THE SAHARA CASES. FONMIN THEN RECALLED SECRETARY VANCE'S UNDERTAKING TO REVIEW PERSONALLY THE BACKGROUND OF THE SAHARA SITUATION, AND HOPED THIS MOVE WOULD REMOVE THE UNFORTUNATE U.S. DISTINCTION BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL AND SOVEREIGNTY. BOUCETTA WENT ON TO SAY HE JUST COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW "TWO ALLIES" COULD REACH A POINT WHERE ONE DEFINES THE TERRITORY OF THE OTHER TO THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY DETRIMENTS OF THE LATTER. RECALLING THE ORIGIN OF THE SECRET 1960 AGREEMENT, HE SAID HE COULD QUITE UNDERSTAND U.S. CONCERN OVER THE USE AGAINST ISRAEL OF US-FURNISHED ARMS EITHER DIRECTLY BY MOROCCO OR THROUGH TRANSFER TO A THIRD COUNTRY. THIS, HE SAID, HAS NOT AND WILL NOT OCCUR.

5. WHEN I MENTIONED THE SECRETARY'S CONCERN PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED TO BOUCETTA OVER THE PRESENCE OF F-5S IN MAURITANIA (AND I ADDED HERE THE SAME HOLDS TRUE FOR F-5S IN THE SAHARA), THE FONMIN SAID HE WAS NOT AWARE OF F-5S IN THESE AREAS AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME. PERSUADED THE ISSUE WOULD NOT ARISE DURING THE CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE, HE COMMENTED THAT AS FAR AS HE KNEW THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY PUBLIC FOCUS ON THIS ISSUE. I SAID THAT THERE HAD

BEEN PAST PRESS REPORTS OF F-5S IN MAURITANIA AND IN THE SAHARA, THAT THERE COULD VERY WELL BE FUTURE PRESS REPORTS ABOUT F-5S IN THESE AREAS, AND THAT IN WASHINGTON'S VIEW, THE BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE A QUIET WITHDRAWAL OF THE PLANES IN QUESTION. BOUCETTA THEN ASKED RHETORICALLY IF THIS MEANT THAT THE U.S. WISHED MOROCCO TO CEASE HELPING MAURITANIA AGAINST EXTERNAL AGGRESSION. IF SO, THIS WOULD CONTRADICT PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT OF SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING FOR MOROCCAN ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA AND HIS CONCERN OVER THE THREAT TO PEACE IN AFRICA FROM THE SOVIET UNION, CUBA AND ALGERIA EXPRESSED TO PRIMIN OSMAN IN WASHINGTON ON DECEMBER 3 LAST YEAR, AND THE U.S. SHOULD INFORM THE GOM WITHOUT DELAY. I RESPONDED THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, THE ADMINISTRATION HAD HAD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CONGRESS IN AN EFFORT TO BE SECRET

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RESPONSIVE TO MOROCCO'S NEEDS, AND THAT IN THESE CONSULTATIONS WE EXPLORED THE QUESTION OF AMENDING THE 1960 AGREEMENT TO EXPAND ITS SCOPE TO INCLUDE THE USE OF U.S. EQUIPMENT BY MOROCCO FOR THE DEFENSE OF MAURITANIA.

6. AT THE CONCLUSION OF MEETING, BOUCETTA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE WAS FULLY AWARE OF U.S. CONCERNS REGARDING MOROCCAN USE OF AMERICAN ARMS IN MAURITANIA AND THE SAHARA, AND REITERATED HE HOPED THAT GOM HAD PROVIDED ADEQUATE ASSURANCES IN THIS REGARD. IN VIEW OF CONTINUING U.S. PREOCCUPATION, HOWEVER, BOUCETTA INDICATED THAT HE WAS INSTRUCTING AMBASSADOR BENGELLOUN TO ADDRESS THE SUBJECT IN GREATER DETAIL SOON AFTER HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON ON APRIL 16. BENGELLOUN ADDED THAT HE WOULD REQUEST MEETINGS WITH THE SECRETARY AND WITH HIS "VERY OLD FRIEND", UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM, TO DISCUSS THIS AND OTHER URGENT BUSINESS.

7. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED.
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